



the presbyterian banner

May 2011

*Great are the works of the LORD;
they are pondered by all who delight in them
Psalm 111:2*

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Editorial

Have you noticed how life has a full circle? From being born into this world as weak and helpless babies, dependent on the nurture of others, we often end our lives the same way, frail and needing the care of others. It is quite a shock to realise that those who brought you up have now becoming those depending on you. And then, very soon, the preceding generation has passed away and you are the next generation. It is the natural way of life here below. But doesn't it overwhelm you sometimes? Who of us are truly up to being the 'elders' in our families – whether physical or spiritual families? Dear friend, the baton is being passed on to us. Are you ready for it? Have you begun your run so that when you receive it you will be doing the very best you can? Is your hand in the right position to receive it? You don't want to drop it!

And yet the marvellous thing through all this is how much God gives us what we need to be able to properly lead. As we look to Him, through His Word, His Spirit guides us in His way. This is the blessing many of our covenantal families can testify to.

In a way, Synod is a part of this process. We will see this particularly so at this Synod with the addition of three newly inducted ministers amongst us. Not that all of them are so young – that reminds me I've got older! – but they are telling us of the passing of the baton.

May the Lord bless their service to Him in their local churches and through our denomination. But may He also raise up more men, and especially young men who come from our own church families.

*Sons are a heritage from the LORD,
children a reward from him.
Like arrows in the hands of a warrior
are sons born in one's youth.
Blessed is the man
whose quiver is full of them.
They will not be put to shame
when they content with their enemies
in the gate.*

Psalm 127:3-5

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'I am Not Ashamed of the Gospel'

Considering Romans 1: 14-17

George Ball

The apostle Paul reminds me here of a little terrier straining at the leash: bursting with eagerness and interest, life and curiosity. Paul says in verse 13 that he had planned to come to Rome — but had been hindered. And in verse 15 he says, 'I am eager (bursting) to preach the Gospel at Rome.' He's straining at the leash. Paul also reminds me of David and Goliath! Rome was like the giant Goliath. Rome was the capital of the world. The seat of government; the symbol of imperial pride and power. It was an imposing and impressive place. It was also, as you can imagine, a place of idolatry and immorality. A place of high culture but also of sophisticated sinning. An intimidating place to visit for any preacher! Rome was not the tourist attraction that it is for us today. The modern equivalent of Rome might be Mecca! Imagine going to Mecca as a missionary! Paul was like little David. According to tradition he was a little man, unimpressive in appearance. Yet this little man could say, 'I am eager to come; I want so much to come; I can't wait to come to you; I'm rarin' to go!' Like David, he could have said, 'I come against you, not with sword or spear or javelin — for the Lord doesn't save with these, but I come in the name of the LORD Almighty.'... The only weapon that Paul had in his backpack was the Gospel — yet he wasn't afraid! Indeed, he relished the challenge. He says, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel.' (v.16). This is likely a negative way of stating the positive — an example of litotes. (So James Philip and Moffatt). It's a deliberate understatement for effect. E.g. you ask me how I am. I answer, 'Not bad,' which really means, 'I'm good!' Or, if someone says, 'Not happy, Jan!' it really means they're very angry and upset! So when Paul says, 'I'm not ashamed of the Gospel,' he means, 'I'm immensely proud of it; it's the news that I'm proud and confident to proclaim.' Of course it's possible to be ashamed of the Gospel — sadly! Who hasn't been? Jesus alludes to it in Mark 8: 38, 'If anyone is ashamed of me and

my words... the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in His Father's glory.' Paul alludes to it in 2 Tim: 1 v. 8, 'Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me His prisoner. That, however, was not Paul's problem. I hope it's not a problem for you either.

What made Paul unashamed of the Gospel? Why did it fill him with wonder, admiration and confidence? Is it because he had special courage and resources that nobody else had? Not at all! He was proud of the Gospel because:—

The Gospel is the Power of God

The Gospel is words — it's a message. It's an account of what God has done for us in Christ — but it's more than that. It's power. (The Greek word is 'dunamis': from which we get words like: dynamite, dynamic, dynamo, dynamic, etc). The gospel is not offering some new concept or philosophy; nor is it presenting merely a good idea, or simply offering good advice. If that's all the gospel is — we would have every reason to be ashamed of it. Good advice won't save us, even if it is well meaning and well intended.

The Gospel is the operation of a power — the power of God. 'To preach it therefore is to let loose an immeasurable power among those who hear it.'

We have a fascination with power. As a little boy it was the attraction of tractors, excavators, aeroplanes, boxers and wrestlers! As a man it is the fascination of governments and rulers and business executives. Remember Rome too had a fascination with power — it had reason to be proud of its power structures; it had the military hardware to subdue nations. Their naval power ruled the waves. Their cultural power gave the world great literature, law and art. Their technical power constructed the great roads, many still in use today. There was one thing however, that Rome, or Caesar, or governments, or culture, or law could NOT do: these things could not change lives.

Whereas the Gospel has the power to transform and change lives. It changed Paul; the Gospel gripped him, humbled him, and radically changed his life on the Damascus road. It changed the way he viewed himself, from one who was 'blameless' to the 'chief of sinners'. He saw it change the lives of others too. Have we not experienced it in our own lives? Has God not reconciled us to himself through Christ, forgiven our sins, made us children, put his Spirit in us, changed us? As the world sees it, the Gospel doesn't look much like power at all. It looks like weakness — spoken by ordinary and fallible people, and believed by wimps. The Gospel uses words which are invisible things. This Gospel instead of telling people to stand up on their own two feet is asking them to become instead like children and depend on Jesus. Yet this Gospel is the power of God to all who believe. There is no need to be ashamed of it.

The Gospel is about Salvation

The Gospel is power with a purpose. There is such a thing as power without purpose. I have a friend who has a museum of more than 300 old engines of various types which he has rebuilt. Visitors can visit the museum to see and hear the engines running. It's a very impressive sight and sound. It's music in the ears of the collector. But what do these engines do? Nothing! They don't empower anything. There is also power which is purposeful — I'm glad of it every time I switch the kettle on or press the light switch. And there is power which is positively destructive. We have seen examples of that recently in Christchurch and in Japan. What kind of power is the Gospel? The Gospel is power with a purpose. It can be both destructive and constructive. It has the power to condemn and cast a soul who rejects it into hell.

It has also the power to save a soul from hell. It's the power of God unto

salvation. It has the power to rescue men and women, boys and girls, from the penalty of sin; from the power and dominion of sin; and ultimately from the presence of sin (bringing us into the immediate presence of Jesus). That's nothing to be ashamed of!

If you knew that someone had found the cure for cancer, would you be ashamed of telling others? No! You'd want to proclaim it as loudly and widely as possible. You'd want to say, 'this is where to go, this is who you must see, this is the treatment that you need.' The Gospel is the only cure there is for the eternal ills of men and women; it's nothing therefore to be ashamed of. It's something to be proud of!

The Gospel is for Everyone

The Gospel is for everyone. It's for men and women. It's for boys and girls. It's for Greeks and non Greeks. It's for the wise and the foolish. It's for learned and unlearned. It's for rich and poor. It's for the Jew and the Gentile; it's for the Muslim and the Hindu. It's for the Anglican and the Catholic. It's for the Baptist and the Presbyterian. It's for the religious and the irreligious. It's for the good and the bad. It's for the truckie and the bikie. It's for the guy with the tattoos and the earrings and the Blundstones. It's for your neighbour and mine. It's for you and me. No one is excluded! It's for every type of person, of every age, colour, nation and language.

We need never worry if perhaps our message is unsuitable! No matter who you meet, you know that the Gospel is suitable for them. It's tailor made! 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' (Romans 10: 13). There's no need to be ashamed of that!

The Gospel Reveals Righteousness (v.17)

What does the Gospel reveal? Perhaps you might say, 'the love of God', 'the mercy of God,' or 'the grace of God'? That's only partly right. Paul tells us however that the Gospel reveals supremely 'the righteousness of God'. This is a key word and an important statement. Indeed, this is the central theme of the letter to the Romans. This verse is some-

what like the contents page of the letter.

Righteousness is what God is. Righteousness is what God does. Righteousness is what God requires of us all. Righteousness is what we all need to be right with God. We don't have a righteousness of our own. There is none righteous – not one! We could never in a million years earn it or achieve it. But in the Gospel righteousness is revealed – and is royally bestowed on everyone who believes. In the Lord Jesus Christ we have the righteousness that God is completely satisfied with and that passes His scrutiny. When we believe upon Christ, His righteousness, His holiness, His perfect satisfaction is put into our account, and we are declared by God (amazingly) 'righteous'!

This text became for Martin Luther 'the gateway into heaven'. He writes, 'Night and day I pondered it until ... I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith. *Thereupon* I felt myself reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the righteousness of God had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love.' Luther wasn't ashamed of the gospel.



Luther declaring justification by faith

The Gospel is Received by Faith

The Gospel is the power of God to everyone who has faith. The only way to receive this Gospel and receive this righteousness is through faith in the Lord Jesus. Everyone receives it in exactly the same way – no matter who they are – whether Jew or Gentile. There are no exemptions or special categories or conces-

sions or small print. It has always been this way – as we shall see in chapter 4; and it remains this way. Paul told the jailor, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.' (Acts 16: 31). All we need to do is to accept this gift of God (it is a gift – not a wage or reward) with a believing heart.

Some of you are members of the NRMA (in other states the equivalent organisation would be RACV, RACQ, or RACWA). Very wise! Membership carries certain privileges; one of which is the right to be rescued when your vehicle breaks down. Let's say you are driving to Sydney. You smell something burning – and then you see smoke coming from under the bonnet. It's coming from the head gasket. You pull in to the hard shoulder. You are relieved to know that you have a rescuer – a saviour – in the NRMA. What do you do? Just wait for help expecting that NRMA should automatically know your problem? After all, you've been a member for years! No! You call 131 111. You tell them your problem, where you are, and then you can 'unworry'. You must call to be rescued.

The Bible tells us who are broken down and ruined that we must call to be rescued, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' (Rom.10: 13). You must call! You must believe. You must receive. 'It is not because of any value my faith has that God is pleased with me. It is only because Christ's satisfaction, righteousness and holiness make me right with God. And I can receive this righteousness and make it mine in no other way than by faith alone.' (Heidelberg Cat. 61).

'The righteous will LIVE by faith! The Gospel is all about LIFE – abundant life; eternal life; life to the full. The opposite of life is death. There is a choice. The wise will always choose life! It's nothing to be ashamed of!

Life under the Banner

The Quieted Soul (I)

We live in a noisy world. Everywhere you find people, you find noise. The noise of the TV at home. Noise at work. Noise at sporting events. Noise on construction sites. Noise at schools. Babies crying, dogs barking, tires squealing, couples arguing, stereos booming.

Noise, noise, noise, it's impossible to escape from. In fact, there are some who would not know what to do with themselves without some kind of racket blaring in the background. For them, silence is frightening. It makes them feel alone.

For most of us though, there are times when we just have to get away from all the clamor. It's late at night, after the children have gone to bed. You sit down in your lounge, close your eyes, and just drink in the silence. Ah, finally, some peace and quiet.

The thing is, though, the quiet we need to experience is more than just an absence of sound-waves hitting our ear-drums. There is a quiet we need that we cannot get with ear-plugs.

The problem is that in the midst of a noisy world, we have noisy souls. The sinfulness of the world, and even more, the sinfulness of our own heart — it has cluttered our soul, making it noisy, filling us with a fundamental uneasiness. Our souls are in turmoil. What we need, far more than quieted ear-drums, is quieted souls. To put it simply, we need peace. We need what the Jewish people call: shalom. Mind you, this is not easy to find in our sin-filled hectic world. Not easy at all.

The way to a quieted soul

So, how is it possible for us to have a quieted soul? How can you experience peace in your heart? Well, Psalm 131 proclaims an important truth regarding this. In a few short verses, this beautiful Psalm of David displays in succinct poetic language what it means to have a quieted soul. One of the ways it does this is by presenting before us what the opposite of the quieted soul is, showing us what it is that prevents us from having a quieted soul.

This is what we will focus on for the rest of this article: one of the main problems that gets in the way of knowing true peace. Then next month, we'll look further at what this psalm teaches us about how we can have a quieted soul.

We turn our attention to the first half of verse 1 of Psalm 131 — 'Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty.' The psalmist is basically saying here: I am not proud. If you have a haughty heart and lofty eyes, you are a proud person.

The truth here is quite simple. Having a pride-filled heart is the opposite of having a quieted heart. Pride simply precludes any real possibility of peace, either peace with yourself or peace with God. Pride and peace cannot go together.



You could sit in the most comfortable of all recliners. You could meditate on the most sublime of musical compositions. You could find the most serene location in all the universe, light-years away from all the distractions of modern civilisation. But with pride in your heart, any peace you think you may be feeling will be fleeting. You will not be able to know the peace that comes from truly being able to say, 'It is well with my soul!'

Jim Klazinga

In his book, *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis talks about pride, and how it is the opposite of Christian morals. 'There is no fault which makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have of it in ourselves, the more we dislike it in others. The vice I am talking of is Pride or self-conceit... According to Christian teachers, the ultimate vice, the ultimate evil, is pride... it was through pride that the devil became the devil... pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind... it is pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began... Pride always means enmity — it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God. In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that — and therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison — you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud, you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something above.'

The ultimate anti-God vice

There is a lot of wisdom in what Lewis is saying here. Pride is the ultimate anti-God vice. In many ways, pride lies at the heart of sin. Pride can never lead to peace. Sadly, pride is encouraged in our society. Mind you, it's not always called pride. Instead, a much more positive word is used: self-esteem. Even many Christians believe we should promote self-esteem. We should feel good about who we are. We should be happy with ourselves. God loves us just the way we are. He has to, because God is love, right? So we should love ourselves just the way we are as well. But think about it: how ultimately proud it is to imagine that God has to love us just the way we are. We

are sinful. We are sinners. We are nothing when compared to God. When we come face to face with His holiness, we are confronted with our own unholiness. When we come face to face with His might, we must realize our weakness. When we become aware of the righteousness of God, this can only make us aware of our complete unrighteousness.

The Bible nowhere allows us to feel good about who we are in and of ourselves. Mind you, what we can feel good about is Christ in us. What we can glory in is that we have been set apart by God the Father since eternity to be holy and blameless before Him. We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. We are sanctified by the Holy Spirit living in our hearts.

And all this is in spite of the fact that we were completely undeserving of it. We merit nothing, we bring nothing in ourselves. Any cause we might think we have for boasting in ourselves, for pride in ourselves, is a mirage. Beyond the work of God in and for us, feeling good about ourselves is sinful pride.

This is true no matter what much of the world and contemporary Christianity says today. We need to realize that much of what we are being told about pride is an insidious, unbiblical lie.

Be aware that this lie is very prevalent. The lie says that the only way that we can have peace with ourselves is to be proud of who we are. But in fact the opposite is true. Only in knowing first of all how sinful and wretched we are can we begin to truly know the peace that comes from knowing that our sins are forgiven in Jesus Christ.

Pride is against peace

To emphasise the fact that pride cannot lead to peace, consider other Scripture passages that speak to this. For example, in 2 Chronicles 26:16, we read about a man named Uzziah, king of Judah — 'But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction.' His pride led to His ruin. In 2 Chronicles 32:25,26, we read about another proud king, King Hezekiah — 'But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah

and Jerusalem. Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.' The pride of Hezekiah incited the wrath of God. Only when he humbled himself was that anger delayed. We can also look to Proverbs 18:12, 'Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, and before honor is humility.' Pride really does go before a fall, doesn't it?

Psalm 18:27 — 'For you will save the humble people, but will bring down haughty looks.' Proverbs 6:16-17 tells us that the Lord hates haughty eyes, they are an abomination to him. And we could go on and on. But by now it should be perfectly obvious. Painfully obvious. Pride can never lead to peace, but only to destruction.

We need to examine our souls, and pray that God might humble us. If He

does not humble us now in this life, He will certainly humble us later in eternity. The proud will be cast down.

Think about what this means, and pray to God now, 'Lord, here I am, a sinner. I have been proud. I have been haughty. I have thought of myself higher than I ought to think. I have not considered others more significant than myself. Lord, humble me. Forgive me.'

When you can say this, truly say this, you will know the Spirit has enabled you to know humility, and you will be on the road to peace. It won't matter how much you are surrounded by noise. You will still be on the road to having a quieted soul.

**Preliminary Notice
(to be ratified by Synod 2011)**

Due to popular demand it is proposed to have a:

FAMILY CAMP

at

**Naamaroo Conference Centre,
Lady Game Drive
Chatswood, NSW**

**3 pm Tuesday 3rd January to
2 pm Friday 6th January 2012 (DV)**

Please note these dates in your diaries.

**Enjoy Fellowship with other Christian families
Be seriously challenged in your thinking and lifestyle
Afternoons free to relax – games, bushwalks and pool
Psalmody, Peaceful surrounds, Childrens programme**

Brochures with further details available soon

**Please pray for God's help and blessing as organisation
for the camp commences.**

(Youth & Fellowship Committee)

The Past for Today

Presbyterian beginnings in Melbourne

Last month we considered Christian beginnings in Melbourne. In this article the focus is on Presbyterian beginnings.

Rev James Clow

The first Presbyterian service in Melbourne by an ordained minister was conducted in the Pioneers' Church by Rev James Clow on the afternoon of Sunday 31 December 1837. Clow was a farmer and miller's son born with only one hand at Charterhall near Stirling, Perthshire in 1790. He was educated at St Andrews and Edinburgh and licensed as a preacher by the Church of Scotland Presbytery of Kirkcaldy in 1813. In April 1815 the same Presbytery ordained him as a Chaplain to the East India Company at Bombay, where he arrived in November that year. In April 1819, just 12 days before he presided at the opening of the building of St Andrew's Church, which he had caused to be erected for his congregation, Clow married Margaret Morrison. Eight children were born to them in India but only six survived infancy – four girls and two boys. Clow's health was increasingly poor, and he retired in November 1833 with the handsome pension of £365 a year. He returned to Scotland where two more daughters were born.



Rev James Clow (on chair)

Clow had met Rev Dr John Dunmore Lang when on furlough in Scotland in 1829. In 1823 Lang had become the first Presbyterian minister on the Australian mainland, and was based in Sydney. He made frequent overseas trips, chiefly in the interest of obtaining more ministers. Clow maintained a correspondence with Lang, and decided he would go out to South Australia. On 4 May 1837, shortly before his 47th birthday, Clow, his family and two servants boarded the barque *New Britain* at Leith for the four-month voyage to Hobart. There were three other Church of Scotland ministers on board: John Lillie (1806-66), destined for Hobart, where he was inducted at St Andrew's Church on 10 September with James Clow presiding; William Hamilton (1807-79) who fell in love with Clow's 13 year old daughter Margaret, married her in 1840 with her parents' blessing, and took her back to the manse of Goulburn; and John Tait (1809-60), who had married two days before sailing, and was to serve at Wollongong and later at Geelong. Arriving at Hobart on 4 September 1837 after a relatively uneventful voyage, Clow heard such glowing reports about the prospects of Port Phillip that he made a visit. Landing near Geelong at Point Henry, which was named after one of Henry Reed's ships, he conducted a service in Dr Thomson's house *Kardinia* on the Barwon River in what is now called Belmont, probably on Sunday 15 or 22 October 1837. This was the first service conducted by a Presbyterian minister in Victoria. Clow rode the 50 miles (80 kms) to Melbourne and was present at the second land sale on 1 November where he purchased 4 allotments totalling about 2 acres (0.8ha) on the south west corner of Lonsdale and Swanston Streets extending to Little Bourke Street, using £162 of the three or four thousand pounds he had brought with him. Clow returned to Hobart, organised his affairs and chartered three schooners for the trip to Melbourne. He brought with him all the materials to construct a weatherboard dwelling as

Rowland S. Ward



Rev Dr John Dunmore Lang

well as supplies for a year, two tents and other items. It was a very rough crossing and took about two weeks, but the family landed safely at Melbourne on Christmas Day after their 60 ton vessel had been driven aground for a time at Williamstown. There was no one to meet them and they walked the mile (1.6km) over rough ground to their newly acquired property at the furthest extremity of the township. Clow immediately took steps to organise a Church of Scotland service in the Pioneers' Church on 31 December 1837.

Rev James Forbes

When on 20 January 1838 James Forbes walked across the planks from the ton steamer *James Watt* and stepped on to the bank of the Yarra River, he was surely greeted by some of those who had gathered as the steamer disembarked her 141 passengers. It is probable that Rev James Clow was among those who greeted him; but as the fortnightly overland mail service from Sydney had only begun a month before, it is unlikely he had prior knowledge of Forbes' arrival. James Forbes was the oldest of the ten children (only five surviving infancy) born to Peter and Margaret Forbes, who farmed on the 'New Braes' estate of Sir Arthur Forbes in

the parish of Leochel-Cushnie about 45 km west of Aberdeen, Scotland. James was baptised on 4 April 1813, and was educated locally and at Aberdeen Grammar School.



*Leochel-Cushnie Church, 1797
(Photo William Lawson, 2004)*

He entered King's College, Aberdeen, in 1826 and completed the Arts course in 1829 but, like the majority of students who regarded it as an expensive formality, he did not bother to officially graduate. The Church of Scotland's Presbytery of Garioch records show that he was enrolled in divinity for part of 1829/30, 1830/31 and as a regular student 1831/32. He may have had doubts about his fitness for the ministry for he accepted a teaching appointment at the Colchester Royal Grammar School in England between 1832 and 1835. Mind you, filling in with teaching was a common practice as there were more candidates for ministry than places available. In Colchester, Forbes experienced an evangelical conversion as he heard the sermons given in the school assembly by the Church of England preachers. This brought him back to the divinity course at Aberdeen which he completed in 1837. He was licensed as a preacher by the Presbytery of Garioch on 10 May 1837. Recruited for Australia along with about 20 other ministers and teachers through the influence of Rev John Dunmore Lang, Forbes was ordained for work in Australia with his friend William McIntyre by the Presbytery of Glasgow on 29 June 1837. The dark-haired and bearded Forbes was, according to C.S. Ross, 'a thin man, somewhat above the medium height, with a naturally grave but kindly expression of countenance, which inspired confidence, and won the hearts of his fellowmen'. Only one photograph of him is known.

Forbes left Greenock on the 541 ton barque *Portland* on 24 July 1837. The ship carried 310 passengers, seventy of whom were cabin and the rest steerage. There were no less than 25 clergy on board including John Dunmore Lang and James Forbes. Forbes had cabin accommodation and his fare was £55. Although 25 children died, mostly of measles, and four adults also died, there were no attacks by pirates. The diet on board was poor and an outbreak of scurvy occurred near Madagascar. On Lang's advice the ship stopped at King George Sound near Albany in Western Australia to reprovision. All the sick made a remarkable recovery. During the voyage there were regular prayers each day and services on Sunday shared among the clergy on board. Forbes also led discussion on teaching methods, and there were classes for the children. The *Portland* arrived in Sydney on Sunday 3 December 1837 in the evening.



Rev James Forbes

Writing in 1847, Lang referred to the ministers he had brought out in 1837, with the exception of William McIntyre, as the 'Twelve Apostles' consisting of 'four Judas Iscariots, and eight full-grown specimens of contemptible shuffling and drivelling incapacity'. But his assessment of Forbes at the time was rather different:

'Mr Forbes is a very young man somewhat vain of his superior accomplishments, somewhat dictatorial. But we feel perfectly confident that he will prove a zealous, active and accept-

able minister, wherever he may be settled.'

Forbes certainly did prove to be a zealous, active and acceptable minister. Although without ministerial experience he was the ideal man for the task of building up the Presbyterian church, as subsequent events demonstrate. His appointment being for the District of Port Phillip, Forbes proceeded there by the *James Watt*. He left Sydney on 7 January 1838 and arrived via Launceston on 20 January 1838 as previously stated. Having surveyed the field, Forbes lost no time in beginning work. He conducted his first service in the simple wooden Pioneers' Church on Sunday 28 January, and the following day wrote to the Police Magistrate, Captain Lonsdale, with a view to securing more suitable use of the building. After all, he was the only minister appointed to Port Phillip, and the building had been funded on a non-denominational basis. The following day Lonsdale, who was an Anglican, responded that few Presbyterians would have contributed to it and the land was now reserved for the Church of England. However, he conceded Forbes' request for two services each Sunday, the first at 12.15pm and the second at 4pm, and this arrangement began on 4 February 1838. Episcopal services were held at 10.30am and 6pm with Sabbath school at 9am and 2pm. There was an underlying attitude of superior rights for the Church of England. Lang in Sydney had had to fight for the right to solemnise marriages (secured 1824), and to remove the monopolistic Church and School Corporation which reserved one-seventh of the land for the Church of England (replaced by Bourke's *Church Act* in 1836). John Lillie in Hobart had to battle for 10 years to secure freedom from the obligation of pupils at the Training School in Launceston to attend Anglican services (secured 1847). Clow had had similar problems in Bombay.

The first Scots' Church and School, 1838

On Saturday 3 February 1838 a meeting of members and friends of the Church of Scotland was held with James Clow in the chair. It was

resolved to build a church that would also serve as a schoolhouse, and that £300 be raised in order to obtain the matching grant available under the Church Act. This is regarded as the official birthday of Presbyterianism in Victoria and the beginning of Scots' Church. A committee of James Clow (treasurer), James Forbes and Skene Craig (secretaries) was appointed to collect subscriptions and to take the steps to obtain a church site. The sum of £139.19.0 was subscribed on the spot. A simple temporary church in Collins Street West next to where the Rialto building now stands was erected on a site loaned by David Fisher and it was in use by June. It measured 29 feet by 15 feet. The 2 acre site on the corner of Collins and Russell Streets where the first permanent Scots' Church was built in 1841 (replaced by the present building in 1874), was soon secured as a government grant.



Permanent ministers arrival dates		
James Forbes	Presbyterian	20 January 1838
William Waterfield	Independent	22 May 1838
James C. Grylls	Church of England	12 October 1838
P.B.Geoghegan	Roman Catholic	15 May 1839
Joseph Orton	Wesleyan (Methodist)	3 October 1840
John Ham	Baptist	13 December 1842

The World in the Banner

What happened when South Korea banned corporal punishment

I blogged earlier about South Korea banning corporal punishment recently and the sudden upsurge in assaults on teachers and bullying amongst students. According to a teacher, 'the troublesome students find the new ban as a godsend.' hilariously, the Ministry of Education had to come up with alternatives: 'The ministry was responding to widespread complaints from teachers that students were running riot since corporal punishment was banned in Seoul in November. Teachers argued that physical punishments were widely considered an effective means of disciplining students in schools. Under the guidelines, teachers are permitted to discipline students by ordering them to do push-ups, stand in the back of the classroom, or run or walk a few laps around the school playground. Teachers will be permitted to suspend students from school for up to ten days, with a maximum suspension of 30 days a year. Suspended students will receive counseling from education

experts. If a student keeps misbehaving after 30 days of suspension, the ministry will allow teachers to summon parents to school for counseling.' Of course, in the past, the misbehaviour would have been dealt with in 5 minutes. Now it can take up to 30 days!! As expected, the liberals immediately criticised the guidelines of press-ups and running laps, saying, 'The push-ups suggested by the ministry will inflict physical pain on students, and it isn't allowed by the Seoul Office of Education.' The latest report shows that teachers have lost control and say students now have the upper hand 'This has led to an increase in disruptions, and students are openly – and unabashedly – questioning and challenging their teachers. In some cases, even top-performing students who had long been the teacher's pet have been acting up as well, convinced by their fellow classmates to take advantage of the regulation governing student human rights. Teachers say they are literally powerless to stop disruptions and deal with misbehaving stu-

dents, arguing that the course of action allowed is to make them sit down or talk with them.' Welcome to a typical New Zealand classroom. To our friends in Seoul, it will only get worse!
+ *Family First NZ*

The Pressures of Politics

There is immense pressure on the Prime Minister and her minority government to give serious consideration to same sex marriage and euthanasia. Being beholden to the Greens and four independents means that a leader who is not fully committed at heart to marriage in her personal life will find it even harder to resist renegeing on a promise to uphold marriage as between one man and one woman. I believe the highest political office of our nation not only deserves our respect, but we are required to respect that position. The problem we face however is that we need to be critical of one who holds that office and who is unable to maintain faith with the people of the nation she serves by

changing her position on some critical issues dependent on what she believes people want to hear, and will keep her in power.

How should we think about the debate on homosexuality?

The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 can hardly be more direct. He asks us whether we really understand that there are certain people, or more particularly, certain life style choices people make, which will exclude them from the kingdom of heaven. He calls these people 'the wicked', and in case we don't understand who the wicked are, he specifies who he is referring to, '...Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.' (1 Cor. 6:9-10)

No one can fail to notice that homosexuals are included here. By the way, let's be careful to use correct terminology. We are not addressing 'gays'. There is nothing about homosexuality that can be described as happy as all the colours of the rainbow. The homosexual agenda has hijacked the word to dull the senses and thinking of people into thinking that there is something good about the homosexual life style, but Biblically and morally this is a wicked choice of life which will only result in contributing significantly to the destruction of the fabric of society, bringing much trial and degradation, and deliver the rebel heart to an eternity of deep suffering.

However, is homosexual sin unforgivable? It is important when reading the passage from Corinthians that we don't just note or hear the negative. The apostle goes on. Remember as you look at these verses that he was addressing the church in Corinth. He wrote to Christian people who knew what the title Christian really meant. These were people who depended on the mercy and grace of God shown and worked in the life, death and resurrection of the Son of God. Do you see what is said in verse 11? In the previous verses he had listed a series of life styles and the people who choose to live that way, and said that such people will not inherit the kingdom of heaven, but then he makes a very import an statement. He says,

'And that is what some of you were'. These God fearing people of the church of Corinth were once among the wicked.

The wickedness, he has noted previously, if maintained and lived will result in eternal death; but those who repent of their wicked ways and are led to a life in Christ Jesus are forgiven and do inherit the kingdom of heaven. They do, because they are 'washed' and 'sanctified' and 'justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.' (1 Cor.6:11)

This is the kind of church we are and ought to be, a body of people who have been justified by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, who are also struggling together with the remnants of sin to be a people pleasing to God. As John Piper puts it, we want to be a body of sinners who have been justified by Christ alone 'with all of our differing genetic, hormonal, environmental disorders that incline every one of us, in varying ways, to do sinful things.

We want to be a church where homosexual people can either overcome their sexual disorder, or find the faith and courage and help and love and power to live a triumphant, joyful, celibate life with the disorder.'

Let us pray that the Lord in His mercy grant we be a church which knows the sinfulness of homosexual behaviour, as well as being a people who seek to support and guide those struggling with homosexual desires, that they will also know the blessing of being justified in Christ Jesus.

Albert Esselbrugge (Taken from the Box Hill Reformed Church Newsletter)

Conflict Threatens Peace in South Sudan

Conflict has increased within South Sudan since the 9 January 2011 Referendum on Southern Self-Determination. During February the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) clashed with forces of the southern opposition figure Gen. Akhor, leaving 200 dead. Some 50 were killed when the SPLA clashed also with the forces of Gabriel Tanginya, who is backed by Northern Islamic Khartoum. In the North-South border region of Abyei, 100 Misseriya Arab militiamen and other Khartoum-backed forces massacred police and

civilians. On 2 March the same forces, 1000-strong, attacked another Abyei village causing 33 casualties. This violence has triggered a massive displacement of 45,000 Southern Sudanese — mostly women and children — fleeing south. Both the North and the South are preparing for conflict. Please pray for the long-suffering, war-ravaged, predominantly Christian masses of South Sudan.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 099 | Wed 16 Mar 2011*

UK Judge Overturns Advertising Standards Authority Ruling

A 22 March 2011 BBC article titled 'Judge Overturns ASA Sodomy Ad Ban Decision' reports that a United Kingdom High Court judge has ruled against an Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) 2008 decision that a full page ad titled 'The Word of God against Sodomy' placed in the News Letter by the Sandown Free Presbyterian Church in Ireland (FPCI) in the summer of 2008 was 'homophobic' and could not again be published in the same manner. The ad was placed by the Sandown FPCI ahead of an August 2008 'Gay Pride' parade in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The ruling said: 'The applicant's religious views and the Biblical scripture which underpins those views no doubt cause offence, even serious offence, to those of a certain sexual orientation. Likewise, the practice of homosexuality may have a similar effect on those of a particular religious faith. But Article 10 (of the European Convention on Human Rights) protects expressive rights which offend, shock or disturb. Moreover, Article 10 protects not only the content and substance of information but also the means of dissemination since any restriction on the means necessarily interferes with the right to receive and impart information. The fact is that the advertisement did not condone and was not likely to provoke violence, (it) contained no exhortation to other improper or illegal activity, (and) constituted a genuine attempt to stand up for their religious beliefs and to encourage others to similarly bear witness. Whilst such views and scriptural references may be

strongly disdained and considered seriously offensive by some, this does not justify the full scope of the restrictions contained in the impugned determination.'

+ *BBC, 201 Wood Lane, London W12 7TS, England, Fax: 020-8008-2398*
+ *Free Presbyterian Church in Ireland, info@freepres.org*

Jerusalem Bomb Kills Scottish Bible Translator In Israel to Study Hebrew

The 23 March 2011 bomb blast in Jerusalem, Israel, attributed to Palestinian militants, injured fifty people and killed 59-year-old Mary Gardner from Orkney, Scotland, who was studying Hebrew for six months at Jerusalem's Hebrew University in preparation for returning to Togo and working on translation of the Old Testament into the Togolese language, Ife.

Mary Gardner had worked in Togo since 1989 under the auspices of Wycliffe Bible Translators, translating the New Testament into the Ife language.

+ *Assist USA, danjuma1@aol.com*
+ *Wycliffe Bible Translators, Info_USA@wycliffe.org*

Pakistan: Killings Continue

(1) ASSASSINATED! On 2 March Pakistan's first Christian cabinet minister, Shahbaz Bhatti, the Minister for Minorities, was assassinated on his way to a cabinet meeting. Militants from Taseem Al Qaeda and Tehrik-e-Taliban Punjab drove into Islamabad's secure diplomatic area, gunned down the MP and drove away, leaving many suspecting that members of the security forces were complicit. Bhatti, a Catholic and long-time religious liberty advocate, was killed for his courageous public stance against the blasphemy law and as a protest against the government's appointment of a 'disbeliever' to the cabinet.

(2) MURDERED? Qamar David, another Christian victim of the blasphemy law, died in Karachi Central Jail on 15 March. Whilst authorities maintain he died of natural causes, his family and supporters are convinced he was murdered. Charged in June 2006, David was sentenced to life in prison in February 2010. He had faced endless threats on his life since his arrest.

(3) SHOT! On 21 March in Hyderabad a group of Muslims were harassing Christian women entering the church, so four Christian men came out to request respect. The Muslims left but returned with guns and four Christians were shot. Younis Masih (47, married father of four) and Jameel Masih (22, married a month ago) died instantly. The Christians had to protest for hours, blocking the main road with the two dead bodies, just to force the police to file their report.

(4) THREATENED! Death threats have been made against Joseph Francis, the director of the Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS) in Pakistan. These death threats started after Mr Francis spoke publicly about the misuse of the blasphemy law. Despite the dangers, Mr Francis is refusing to back down. He simply requests prayers for himself and the entire staff of CLASS.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 101 | Wed 23 Mar 2011*

Presbyterian Seminary Announces Degrees for Ruling Elders and Deacons

Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (GPTS) now offer the Master of Ministry for Ruling Elders and the Master of Ministry for Deacons programs, which include training in personal piety, knowledge of the Bible, understanding of the Presbyterian form of church government, and the role of the elder and deacon in the church. The M.M.R.E. program is designed to help the Ruling Elder function not at the local church level and at the presbytery and General Assembly level. The M.M.D. program is designed to help the Deacon see his role not only in terms of the local church, but in the wider church as well.

The requirements of the M.M.R.E. and M.M.D. program may be completed in as little as two years of full-time study at GPTS. The degree may also be completed under GPTS's Mentor-supervised Distance Education program.


For more information, please see: <http://www.gpts.edu/resources/documents/>

April_2011_Enewsletter.htm
+ *Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, info@gpts.edu*

China Church Seeks Right To Worship Freely

Christians in China are free to meet, but only under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) registering authority in CCP-registered premises. Whilst some 37 million Christians worship in official CCP-registered churches, some 66 million do not. Churches remain unofficial generally because CCP conditions for registration severely curtail religious freedom. Christians who meet in 'abnormal, fanatical' (i.e. unregistered) churches risk police brutality and up to 15 days in detention or up to three years in the 'laogai': some 1000 CCP 're-education through [slave] labour' camps. Authorities have hounded Beijing's 1000-strong Shouwang Church from various premises since 2008 and the church is now battling to meet even in the open until officials grant them their right to worship in an approved location. Please pray for the Church in China.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 103 | Wed 13 Apr 2011*



A Bible ministry for all ages

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DAVID COOK
THE UNHEEDED TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

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Children under the Banner

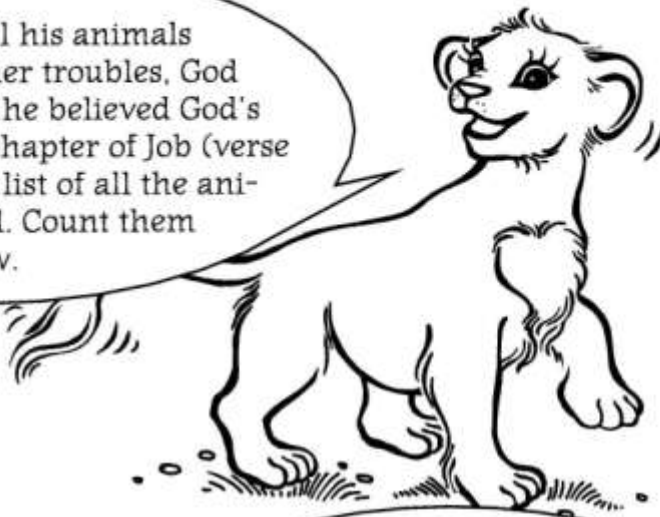
Job's Riches



Job, a very rich man, had many animals. In Job 1:3 there is a list of the animals he owned. Count them to see how rich he was.

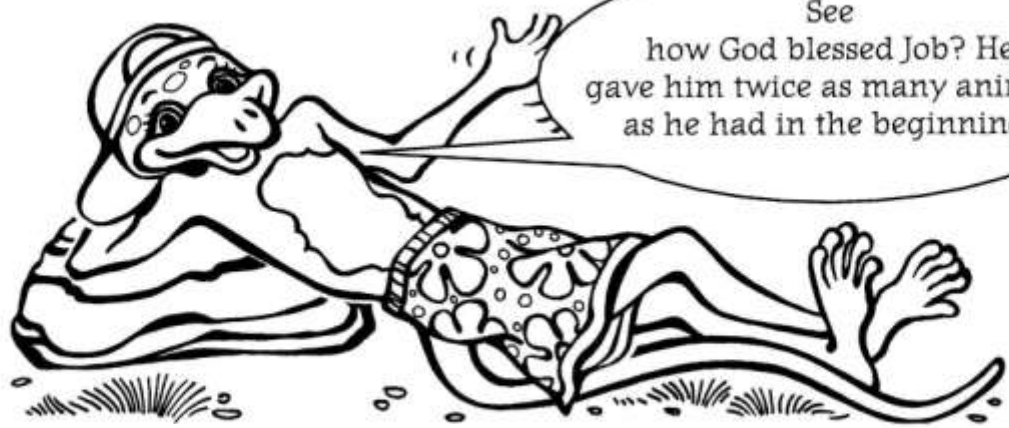
- sheep _____
- camels _____
- yoke of oxen _____
- donkeys _____
- total _____

After Job lost all his animals and had many other troubles, God blessed Job because he believed God's promises. In the last chapter of Job (verse 12) there is another list of all the animals Job owned. Count them now.



- sheep _____
- camels _____
- yoke of oxen _____
- donkeys _____
- total _____

See how God blessed Job? He gave him twice as many animals as he had in the beginning!



From: 'Search and Solve: Bible Activity Sheet',
 by Betty De Vries,
 [Illustrated by Donna Greenlee]
 Baker Books, 1998

Prescribed Search / Youth Work

MAY 2011

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 1 and 2)

JUDGES chapter 3

1. Which nations did the Lord leave, to prove whether the children of Israel would keep his commandments?
2. Name three judges mentioned in this chapter who delivered Israel.

chapter 4

3. What was Deborah's message to Barak concerning Sisera and his army? (2 verses)
4. Why would the journey not be for Barak's honour (or glory)?
5. What happened when Barak came down from Mount Tabor with his ten thousand men? (2 verses)
6. What was the name of the woman who killed Sisera?

Chapter 5

7. What words did Deborah use to commend the tribes of Zebulun and Naphthali?
8. Why was Meroz cursed?

JUNIOR

JUDGES chapter 4:1--9

1. How long had Jabin king of the Canaanites oppressed Israel? How many chariots did he have?
2. What message did Deborah give Barak when she sent and called him? (2 verses)

chapter 5:18--31

3. Which river swept away the enemy?
4. Who would be blessed above women in the tent?

Please send the answers to:
Mrs I Steel
PO Box 942
Epping NSW 1710
Or email to: iesteel@gmail.com

Mission in the Banner

News from India

God gave increase...

PRAY FOR INDIA

By: Pradeep Kumar, PFC Chhapara

There has been great encouragement recently in the village work in the central part of India. Many servants of God from Australia, Scotland and local people have worked hard with prayers and tears in this part of the country for many years. Now God has given increase and we are seeing the real fruit of their labour. Many spiritual activities are being organised to follow-up and to teach the Word of God through Sunday Schools, House Churches, Youth Camps, Seekers Camps and Monthly Discipleship Programs.

In Chhapara, Grace Ministries of India team in the leadership of Mr. Vinay Das, one of the orphans, and The Rev. P. Kumar Memorial Trust Chhapara are working together with local Churches to serve the Lord and to reach the unreached. Missionaries preach the Gospel and visit villages, the Church teaches, and The Rev. P. Kumar Memorial Trust arranges funds to help the missionaries and new believers, providing Bibles for new believers and bicycles for the missionaries, and also provides funds for organising Seekers Camp and Monthly Discipleship Programs. This is our strategy to work together and spread the word of God—which is our supreme task.

PFC Youth Retreat 2010

It was not long ago that we planned to meet the spiritual needs of young Christian with a specific ministry. It all began in 2008. In previous two years we had witnessed God's unexpected favor in success of the Retreats 2008 and 2009, and then time came to testify God's care for young souls yet again in 2010. Lots of thoughts and labour went into the effort. God added His blessings in them, causing us to wonder and praise Him with our mouths wide open and hearts filled with joy. The Retreat took place in Chhapara, attended by 97 young people who stayed at Mission School.

The most encouraging fact was that 56 of those youth were new believers/seekers mostly belonging to villages surrounding Chhapara. The theme was 'I PRESS ON', encouraging youth to run their race with Faithfulness, Commitment and Holiness.

Seekers Camp 2010

The Rev. P. Kumar memorial Trust Chhapara organised 2nd Spiritual Seekers Camp, which was named Satsang (Satsang is an indigenous way to proclaim spiritual truth, used by Hindu Gurus) in December 26th-28th in the memory of Late Rev. Prakash Kumar. Initially it was planned for all the seekers residing near Chhapara, but this year we decided to invite only selective new believers changing our strategy due to the hostile atmosphere around. 80 people attended the event and were encouraged to **Grow up in Christ**; the theme of the Seekers Camp 2010. These new believers were taught to grow in different areas of their spiritual lives by local speakers. At the end, as expected, we just praised God for using different people with diverse gifts to grow his Church spiritually and numerically. About 200 people including congregation attended at evening services and enjoyed the fellowship of new believers from different villages. Their accommodation was provided by Mission School Chhapara. Result: A Professor of the Government College, Chhapara Prof. Varade, was baptised with his whole family — his wife and a child. We praise God.

Monthly Discipleship Program: Prayer Needs

The Christian community of Chhapara has been witnessing a great growth in the number of new believers and seekers in the past few years. On one hand such rapid escalation fills us with a heavenly bliss leading all of us to praise and thank God. But, on the other hand, it overwhelms us with a sense of responsibility towards these new believers. To our observation, there are those who call themselves

believers, yet miss the message of the Cross by limiting Christ's power to physical blessings. Some of them do possess the right understanding of the Gospel but are not able to cope with the social pressure of life. Still many others can be found who participate in Christian activities regularly but fail to exhibit their maturity in faith publicly. There can be many other observations corresponding to the same need — especially the need of scripture teaching. New believers lack understanding of the Gospel and failure to total commitment does not mean that they have no faith in Christ; rather, it indicates that they are not being taught the basic beliefs of Christian Faith profoundly. This knowledge has led us work out a Discipleship Training Program titled 'Grow up...in Christ'. The program is planned and being funded by the Rev. P. Kumar Memorial Trust in association with Chhapara Church Session and Grace Ministries of India, to help the new believers, seekers and missionaries of the Grace Ministries of India who are working in Chhapara to have a better understanding of Christ and his work, and to be encouraged to live a life of gratitude and commitment.

Objectives:

To teach new believers the sole authority of God's word over their faith and life.

To teach the basic dogmas of Christian Faith in simplified and contextualized manners.

To lead them towards maturity of Faith, Christian obedience, and total commitment through fellowship and counseling.

To make them Disciples of Christ who shall be willing to proclaim Christ and suffer many social and other disadvantages for the Faith.

Outcome

In the long term, through the program we hope to raise a generation of new believers who in future will come out from their own social bar-

riers and be able not only to formulate a mature Christian family or community, but also to teach biblical truths to their next generations.

A few years back a young boy from a poor locality of Chhapara, Mr. Fakir Chand, heard the Gospel and became a born again Christian. He is now serving as an evangelist in Chhapara having finished B.Th. Now his younger brother, Mr. Brajlal, having finished B.Sc., expressed his desire to go to seminary and to serve the Lord. He is now doing B.Th. from PTS Dehradun. Miss Laxmi Bar-maiya, who worked many years at Rev. P.Kumar's house, was baptised a few years back and is supported by Inverness Support Group while she does nursing training. Now her whole family excluding her father is in faith and are strong believers. Please pray for all these spiritual activities, for new believers, missionaries and evangelism work.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY.

Taleem School for Muslim children in Bihar, India

by Dennis and Elizabeth Muldoon

In January this year we had the opportunity to visit India. We went to see old places and old friends, as in places and friends from the days when we lived and worked in India as Interserve partners. While there we wanted to meet with Dr Rahmat, whose work among Muslims is supported by the PCEA. We planned to visit one of the centres where he has established a work, a town in the state of Bihar called Maharajgang. 'Maharaja' means king in the local language — the place of the king. We landed in Delhi, visited Dr Dickson briefly and then took the overnight train to Allahabad. On January 4 Dr Rahmat and Sajjad, his young colleague, arrived from Dehradun. The next morning we boarded the train and at 10pm arrived at Siwan. Rahmat had called ahead to arrange a taxi and a security man to accompany us. It was not very safe to travel the roads after dark in this part of the country because of terrorists (Naxalite/Maoists). After an hour (35km) we passed through Maharajgang and eventually arrived at

'Hussain Villa' in Balbanga village (6km further). It was winter and very cold for India (-3deg. C), especially when there was little heating. There was no electricity or running water in the village.

The next day we left to visit the Taleem (discipleship) centre. Because of the cold all district schools were closed, but Rahmat had arranged for the children to come on this day. Getting out of the taxi, we walked down the narrow lane/drain of the town till we saw a sign announcing 'Murideen Marifat Taleem Centre' in English and Urdu. Going in, we saw over 50 children seated on the floor (bricks and mud) in a room of 4 x 4m. This was the class for under 8 year olds. In the adjacent classroom older children were sitting at narrow desks.

In a third room, the other half of this building, rice and pulses were being cooked for the children's lunch. This room had an earthen floor and no doors. In an open quadrangle the children sat to eat their meal and later to play. There was a latrine and a hand pump for water in a corner of the yard. The school was secure with buildings and a high wall all around it. The school building had a new corrugated iron roof that Rahmat had paid for.

The Taleem centre is well located in the town, although all the girls are escorted to and from the centre for safety. We later walked through the narrow lanes of this town. Few people were out because of the cold weather. This was a blessing since foreigners were not a common sight in this town. Rahmat was concerned for our safety at all times.

The next morning we had breakfast of 'aloo paratha' and 'chai' and got ready to leave. Rahmat looked concerned as he talked with the others and made phone calls. He said news had got out that he was in town with foreigners. He feared an opposition group might be ready to confront us back at the railway station in Siwan. He suggested we take the taxi all the way to Ghorakpur and get on the train there. When he showed me scars on his legs from previous attacks by Muslims, I readily agreed! His friend Sajjad decided to leave us

and visit his home near Patna. We traveled on the train overnight and reached Dehradun the next afternoon — to enjoy a warm bath!

The people

The Lord's work is about people, about helping people in their need; both physical and spiritual (Mat 9: 35). People are the focus of Rahmat's ministry; people of Muslim background. His focus is upon people who are poor and marginalised. I have gone back and read the initial proposal and earlier reports on this project. One aim was to keep young people from becoming militant Muslims because of their poverty. Later in a survey Rahmat, or rather his sister, found a community involved in the flesh trade, another outcome of poverty.

In Maharajgang (population c.25,000, literacy 50%) we meet Kaiser, Rahmat's younger sister. After she came to the Lord in 1998 she went from house to house to help the children. Kaiser is a graduate, married with two children. We met her husband, Mr Abrar, also a believer, who works in the Post Office.

Kaiser is the principal of the Taleem centre and teacher of English, Maths and Bible. She was quiet and hard working. We saw all the children, 110 in all, more than the expected 20-25. When I asked about attendance rates she produced a register with their names recorded. She was in need of a new register as the present one was full. I suggested a better way to record attendance. She also produced pages from tests the children had done.

We met Reshma and Shabnam, two other lady teachers. We also met Mr Alamdar, a believer, first at 'Hussain Villa' in the village and later at the school. He stays at the school to guard the property (they have a gas stove and utensils). He also escorts the children to and from school.

Shakeela and another young girl, Zeena, prepared the food. After the children went home and others left, Shakeela stayed back to talk with Rahmat and Kaiser. Rahmat called



me in to say that she wanted to be baptised. She wanted to come with us to Dehradun. It was decided that Kaiser would bring her later. The Lord had touched the heart of this young (late teens?) girl.

We were introduced to the children while in the classrooms and we briefly read the Bible and prayed with each class. I had taken a few Bible books for children (in English). One older girl read from an Urdu primer on the Gospel of Luke that Rahmat had managed to find (see photo). I taught them a Hindi chorus about Jesus — after it was translated into Urdu! Afterwards they were all given a sweet and then went out to play and have their meal. It will be good when the children learn some verses, catechism and songs as we had seen in a village Sunday School outside Allahabad.



Dr Afroze, Rahmat's brother, met us at Siwan station and accompanied us on the visit. He is also a believer and appeared to be assisting Kaiser in the work of the Taleem centre. We were not there on the Lord's Day but were told a small group met for worship in this centre. It seems Afroze has a small clinic in the town — we saw him preparing medicine. At one time Rahmat had a clinic here. Afroze was not present when we left. I think he was sent to Japla to look after the Taleem

centre there for a time. Sajjad accompanied Rahmat all the way from Dehradun. He is a graduate in physiotherapy and is now Rahmat's 'Timothy'; 'now' meaning since the tragic death of Rahmat's wife in March 2009. Sajjad is her brother. Looking back at the reports I noticed the detail that was given prior to her death. She was clearly a great help in this ministry. By God's grace the work continues, but there is a need to further train the leaders and teachers. It was wonderful to meet the children



Seeker's Camp—2010

who are the focus of this ministry. It was a very cold day when we were there — the sun never got through the fog. Yet some children came with no shoes and without sweaters. They come from poor homes and often from depraved homes. I was told of one girl who was being abused by her uncle. She shared this with the teacher and after Rahmat counseled her father the uncle was kicked out. How happy this little girl was to be coming to this centre where people cared and where she heard of the love of Jesus.

The prospect

We praise the Lord for a safe visit to this town in the poorest and most lawless state of India. It was moving to meet the people whom the Lord had placed upon the hearts of Dr Rahmat and his wife over four years ago. The people, especially the children (but not the environment!) left a deep impression on our hearts. We praise God that the children are being loved, being taught to read and write, and hearing the Gospel of



Jesus Christ in this place where the love of God has not been seen before. We saw no churches or Christian witness in this town. I asked Rahmat about other Christians. He said he had met one Pentecostal man some years ago.

I met members of the International Missions Board from the Free Church of Scotland on my last day in India. They support the work of Dr Rahmat in Japla, and Dehradun where he is based. We visited the church Rahmat leads in Dehradun and met a number of women who attended. They came wearing their burqa and with their children (some with husbands also). They came at considerable risk from the community where they lived, to worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is amazing, and something for which we give great thanks to the Lord, that this work is up and running. We should continue in prayer and giving to this strategic ministry. The devil will try to derail it again but God is great and the promise of Jesus remains — Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.



Rev. Muldoon in front of Taleem school